

How to Succeed With Volunteers-In-Parks

60-Minute Module Series

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Training Guide

HANDOUTS

**National Park Service
Volunteers-In-Parks Program**



Guide to Handouts

H-1: Key Concepts of Needs Assessment

H-2: VIP Program Needs Assessment Worksheet

Key Concepts of Needs Assessment

The purpose of conducting a needs assessment is to identify priority work that is appropriate for volunteers to do, as well as the skills needed to do the work.

Concept 1

The needs assessment lays the necessary foundation for developing meaningful volunteer jobs.

With a solid understanding of the priority work that is appropriate for volunteers to do, you will have the key information required to help guarantee success for both your park and your volunteers.

Concept 2

The first step in conducting a needs assessment is to identify priority work that needs to be done, that is not now being done.

Begin by looking at the unfunded backlog of work throughout your park that is not now being done either by paid staff or by VIPs. Arrange the list of work in priority order, organized by division or district to keep it manageable. Make sure your list of unfunded needs is responsive to the priority needs of park management, your park's General Management Plan, and other key planning documents.

Concept 3

The second step in conducting a needs assessment is to identify what portion of the priority work would be appropriate for VIPs.

As you look at your prioritized backlog of work, consider the work now being done by your VIPs. How does it stack up in terms of park priorities? Is volunteer time being spent on work that is not high priority? If so, supervisory time may also be misdirected. Volunteers should always supplement, and not supplant, the work of paid staff. Remember that VIPs can also free up paid staff to make more effective use of their skills.

Concept 4

The third step in conducting a needs assessment is to identify the skills needed to do the volunteer work that is identified.

When you know the skills your volunteers will need to do your work, you will have your best chance for success in designing your volunteer jobs and in finding the very best VIPs to fill them.

Volunteers-In-Parks Program Needs Assessment Worksheet

Unfunded Work That Needs To Be Done	Appropriate Work For Volunteers To Do	Skills Needed To Do The Work

Park Name:

Date: